English Stage 5 (Year 9) – resource booklet

Poetic purpose – phases 3–5 – ‘Circles and Squares’

This document contains the teaching and learning resources and activities that accompany the Year 9 teaching and learning program ‘Poetic purpose’ for the poem ‘Circles and Squares’.

Contents

[About this resource 3](#_Toc151641882)

[Purpose of resource 3](#_Toc151641883)

[Target audience 3](#_Toc151641884)

[When and how to use 3](#_Toc151641885)

[Texts and resources 4](#_Toc151641886)

[Phases 3–5 – ‘Circles and Squares’ by Ali Cobby Eckermann 6](#_Toc151641887)

[‘Circles and squares’, activity 1 – viewing and listening 6](#_Toc151641888)

[‘Circles and Squares’, activity 2(a) – the poet’s context 10](#_Toc151641889)

[‘Circles and Squares’, resource 1 – think aloud 11](#_Toc151641890)

[‘Circles and Squares’, activity 2(b) – prediction activity 12](#_Toc151641891)

[‘Circles and Squares’, activity 3(a) – breaking down the title – idioms 15](#_Toc151641892)

[‘Circles and Squares’, activity 3(b) – breaking down the title – symbolism 16](#_Toc151641893)

[Core Text – ‘Circles and Squares’ by Ali Cobby Eckermann 18](#_Toc151641894)

[‘Circles and Squares’, activity 4 – sketch to stretch 19](#_Toc151641895)

[‘Circles and Squares’, activity 5 – consolidating your ideas 20](#_Toc151641896)

[‘Circles and Squares’, resource 2 – reviewing poetic devices 22](#_Toc151641897)

[‘Circles and Squares’, activity 6 – guided annotation 30](#_Toc151641898)

[‘Circles and Squares’, activity 7 – exploring symbolism 34](#_Toc151641899)

[‘Circles and Squares, activity 8 – mapping themes 39](#_Toc151641900)

[Core formative task 3 – analytical paragraph 43](#_Toc151641901)

[Identifying the demands of the question 43](#_Toc151641902)

[Planning a topic sentence 45](#_Toc151641903)

[Planning your supporting evidence 46](#_Toc151641904)

[Student-facing rubric – ‘what does a good paragraph look like?’ 47](#_Toc151641905)

[Composing your response 49](#_Toc151641906)

[Reflecting on your response 51](#_Toc151641907)

[‘Circles and Squares’, activity 9 – multimodal presentation 52](#_Toc151641908)

[Drafting your presentation 54](#_Toc151641909)

[Writing your transcript 56](#_Toc151641910)

[Reflecting and submission 58](#_Toc151641911)

[Putting it all together 59](#_Toc151641912)

[‘Circles and Squares’, core formative task 4 – informative dialogue 59](#_Toc151641913)

[References 65](#_Toc151641914)

**Updating the table of contents**

Want to update the table? Have you added content to the document and noticed the page numbers have changed? As you add content to this report, you can update the table of contents to accurately reflect the page numbers within the resource. To update the table:

* Right click on the table and select ‘Update table of contents’ (in the browser version) or ‘Update field’ (in the desktop app). In the browser version, it will automatically update the entire table.
* In the desktop app, you will then need to select ‘Update entire table’. Your table numbers should then update to reflect your changes.

# About this resource

## Purpose of resource

This resource booklet is not a standalone resource. It has been designed for use by teachers in connection to Year 9 resources designed by the English curriculum team for the [English K–10 Syllabus](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022) (NESA 2022). These include the Year 9 scope and sequence, Year 9 ‘Poetic purpose’ program and the Year 9 Term 3 sample assessment task and student work sample.

The content in this resource booklet has been prepared by the English curriculum team, unless otherwise credited. Some of the information is collated from relevant NESA and department documentation. It is important that all users re-read and cross-reference the relevant syllabus, assessment and reporting information hyperlinked throughout. This ensures the content is an accurate reflection of the most up-to-date syllabus content. Links contained within this resource were correct as of 13 October 2023.

## Target audience

These samples are informed by the [Department of Education’s Multicultural Education policy.](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2005-0234) There are additional support and educative notes for the teacher (blue boxes), specific EAL/D differentiation notes (pink boxes in this program) and notes for the student (pink boxes in the resource booklet). However, the activities outlined in this sequence can be adjusted to suit a range of learners. Teachers using this resource booklet should adapt these to suit their students’ needs, interests, abilities and the texts selected.

## When and how to use

This teaching and learning resource booklet is designed for Term 3 of Year 9. It provides opportunities for the teacher to build on students’ conceptual understanding of perspective and context and theme explored in Term 1 of Year 9 (‘Representation of life experiences’), and Term 2 of Year 9 (‘Shining a new (stage) light’). Over the course of the program students will have an opportunity to transfer this understanding to a new form. The program will allow students to extend their imaginative and creative thinking skills, and to continue to develop their analytical and creative writing skills.

The resources can be used as an example and adapted for the teacher’s own design of resources. The booklet also serves as an example of how resources and activities can be designed for the [English K–10 Syllabus](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022) (NESA 2022). The resources should be used with timeframes that are created by the teacher to meet the faculty and school assessment schedules.

Before using this resource, teachers are encouraged to investigate [8 Aboriginal Ways of Learning](https://www.8ways.online/), explore the [protocol](https://www.8ways.online/our-protocol) established and the ways other school communities have adapted these pedagogies for their unique learning communities. It is important schools create their own community links by connecting with and consulting local Aboriginal communities about the learning pedagogies of the land on which they teach and learn. This is outlined in [The Partnership Agreement with the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/aec/aboriginal-education-consultative-group-partnership-agreement).

In this way, teachers can take responsibility for ensuring a cultural exchange, avoid cultural appropriation and make their students aware of the importance of seeking permissions, following cultural protocols and connecting with community. The [Map of Indigenous Australia](https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia) is a useful resource for teachers wishing to explore this process with students.

## Texts and resources

A succinct overview of the texts required for the teaching and learning program is outlined in the table below. This brief overview provides the name and details of each text, the syllabus requirement being addressed and points of note.

Table 1 – text selected and alignment to the text requirements

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Text | Text requirement | Annotation and overview |
| Cobby Eckermann A (2017) ‘Circles and Squares’ in little bit long time, Ginninderra Press, Australia. | This poem is a moderately complex text as per the [National Literacy Learning Progression (V3)](https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/national-literacy-and-numeracy-learning-progressions/version-3-of-national-literacy-and-numeracy-learning-progressions/) due to its use of language, structure and content. The poem helps meet the [Text requirements for English 7–10](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022/overview#course-requirements-k-10-english_k_10_2022:~:text=requirements%20K%E2%80%9310-,Text%20requirements,-Engaging%20with%20texts) as students are required to engage meaningfully with poetry. It also gives students experiences of a text by an Aboriginal author which explores cultural, social and gender perspectives. | The poem explores how identity and connection to culture are complicated by consequences of past injustices. It explores an individual trying to exist in 2 worlds and feeling that they will never wholly belong to either one. This results in an authentic representation of individual identity. It underpins the resilience of culture, the desire to heal and the impact of reconnection to one’s cultural identity.  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that the poem contains reference to people who have died. |

# Phases 3–5 – ‘Circles and Squares’ by Ali Cobby Eckermann

In the 'discovering and engaging analytically with a core text' phase students are introduced to the core text ‘Circles and Squares’ by Ali Cobby Eckermann. In these phases, students engage in pre-reading activities to access, understand and engage with the text. Students then explore the text using appropriate reading strategies. Through a focus on poetic devices, students deepen their understanding of how composers use and manipulate language, form and stylistic features.

In the 'deepening connections between a text and concepts' phase student explore how themes can offer insight into a composer's perspective. They explore how Cobby Eckermann’s perspective and representation of ideas is shaped by personal, cultural and political contexts. Through a deconstruction and analysis of ‘Circles and Squares’, students analyse how Cobby Eckermann’s experimentation with code and convention and language and stylistic features shapes her representation of culture, identity and experiences.

In the 'engaging critically and creatively with texts' phase students respond to ‘Circles and Squares’ in critical and creative ways. Students reflect on the form, language and stylistic features of the poem to inform their own compositions. Students collaboratively experiment with a range of communication modes to demonstrate their understanding of the poem in preparation for the formal assessment task.

Throughout Phases 3–5, students will gain a deep understanding of ‘Circles and Squares’. This understanding contributes to their study of the ways Aboriginal authors use poetic forms and structures to communicate complex ideas. This supports students to expand their understanding of others and the world. Their study of this poem will be supplemented by their study of a suite of poems included in this teaching program and of the learning undertaken in Phases 1, 2 and 6.

## ‘Circles and squares’, activity 1 – viewing and listening

**Teacher note:** building the field is an essential component of an EAL/D teaching and learning sequence. Building the field helps EAL/D students to build their vocabulary and accumulate knowledge and skills. The department’s Multicultural education [Planning for teaching](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/multicultural-education/english-as-an-additional-language-or-dialect/teaching-and-learning/planning-for-teaching#:~:text=Planning%20for%20teaching-,Planning%20for%20teaching,-Teachers%20identify%20students) webpage provides a range of strategies to support EAL/D students including a drop-down menu for field building resources.

The following activity is designed to introduce you to the history of The Stolen Generations. It is likely that you will need to watch the video more than once so that you gain an overview of the issues discussed and can compete the cloze passage below.

1. Watch the video, [Sorry Day (4:39).](https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/sorry-day/102363614) It is a short video and will take less than 5 minutes to view.
2. Compete the cloze passage below. You may need to watch the video more than once in order to complete the cloze passage.

**Teacher note:** the cloze passage should be modified to meet the needs of specific class groups, below is a generic example. For EAL/D learners at the ‘Emerging’ or early in the ‘Developing’ phase, the teacher may choose to provide the first letter of more complex terms or have fewer missing words. Additionally, strategically chosen screenshots could be embedded throughout the transcript to assist students in following along. For EAL/D learners at the end of the ‘Developing’ or in the ‘Consolidating’ phase, the teacher may choose to not provide a word bank. The department’s [Multicultural education](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/multicultural-education) webpage provides detailed information about [EAL/D learning progressions](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/multicultural-education/english-as-an-additional-language-or-dialect/planning-eald-support/english-language-proficiency), and how to determine the English language proficiency phase of EAL/D students.

**Cloze passage**

1. Read the following passage and then place the following words where you think they should be: **crying, language, government, traumatised, locked, connect**.

*EILEEN CUMMINGS, MEMBER OF THE STOLEN GENERATIONS:* I wasn't allowed to speak \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I wasn't allowed to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with my mother and my people. Those are things that the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ did to us, and so when you think about children growing up in that system, of course we're going to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in some shape or form.

*HARRY MILLS, MEMBER OF THE STOLEN GENERATIONS:* We got to stay in the mission, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ up in the house, dry bread and water. Two pillows, blanket, No mattress.

*EILEEN MOSELEY, MEMBER OF THE STOLEN GENERATIONS:* Even today, I think about how our poor mothers felt having us \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and telling us to stop crying and then walking away.

1. Read the following passage and then place the following words where you think they should be: **white, baby, taken, Stolen Generations, thought**.

*JACK, REPORTER:* These are just some of the stories that have been shared by the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. That's the name that's been given to a group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who during the 1900s, were forcibly \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_from their homes and their families by the Australian government.

They were put into missions, orphanages or with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ foster families that were often far, far away from their homes.

*ABC REPORTER:* Were you taken away from your parents?

*BOB RANDALL, MEMBER OF THE STOLEN GENERATIONS:* Yes, I was taken away from my mother as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

*ABC REPORTER:* Did this just happen to you or who else did it happen to?

*BOB RANDALL, MEMBER OF THE STOLEN GENERATIONS:* Oh, quite a number of children.

*ABC REPORTER:* Why were they taken away?

*BOB RANDALL, MEMBER OF THE STOLEN GENERATIONS:* I don't know what the reason was. I 'spose they \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ they could give us better homes away from our mothers.

1. Read the following passage and then place the following number and the words where you think they should be: **50, languages, adopt, reject, relate, lighter**.

At the time the government thought that it was better for First Nations children, especially those with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ skin, to be raised by non-Indigenous people. So they made policies that forced kids to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ their Indigenous heritage and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ white culture. Their names were often changed, and they were forbidden to speak their traditional \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

*NANCY DE VRIES, MEMBER OF THE STOLEN GENERATIONS:* When I finally got home to meet my mother after 53 years. I'm sorry. She could not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to me.

More than \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ thousand kids were taken from their homes up until the 1960s, when there were big protests and people started campaigning for Australians First Nations people to be treated better.

1. Read the following passage and then place the following words where you think they should be: **still, all, reconnect, shame, impact, high, together, healing, suffering**.

*JACK:* It was during this period that Aussies started learning for the first time, just what sort of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the Stolen Generations actually had. And then in the 1990s there was a massive investigation called the Bringing Them Home Report.

The report's aim was to acknowledge the pain caused and make recommendations for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and reconciliation, including that the current government apologies for the laws and policies that were put in place by previous governments. In 1998, the year after the Bringing Them Home Report was handed down, Sorry Day was established as a way to recognise and acknowledge Stolen Generations survivors. But it wasn't until 2008 when Kevin Rudd became Prime Minister that the Stolen Generations got their apology.

*KEVIN RUDD, FORMER PRIME MINISTER:* For the pain, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.

It's now been 15 years since that apology and while today there are many organisations and individuals that are working to support and compensate the Stolen Generations, the impacts are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ being felt.

HENRIETTA HUNTER, STOLEN GENERATIONS FAMILY MEMBER: It was even hard for me as a mother to explain that to my kids. And that's but why, Mum? Why? Why? And I said, I really can't explain it.

There are many people who haven't been able to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with their families and many others are only just finding out that they have First Nations heritage. Meanwhile today the amount of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids in out-of-home care is still really \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

*ANYA HARPER, TASMANIAN ABORIGINAL CENTRE:* The figures are appalling, and we all should hang our heads in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We are continuing to create a new, yet a new generation of Stolen Generations.

And while we can't change what's happened in our country's history, many say that Sorry Day is all about acknowledging the mistakes of the past so we can move forward \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and work towards a better future for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Australians.

**Discussion Questions**

**Teacher note:** the following questions should be modified depending on the level of contextual knowledge the class has. For an EAL/D group, it would be ideal to split students into small groups and ask them to discuss the questions then report back to the class. Understanding should be consolidated through note taking or teacher recorded brainstorm on the board.

1. As a class respond to the following discussion questions:
2. What is the Stolen Generation?
3. In the video, there are a number of members of the Stolen Generation sharing their experiences. How would you describe their experience?
4. What are some of the lasting consequences of the Stolen Generation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?
5. What impact on individual identity do you think the Stolen Generation would have had on individuals?
6. In pairs, respond to the discussion questions making sure that you write the answers in your books.
7. Share your ideas with the class. You can add to your own notes if one of your peers shares an insight that you had not considered.

## ‘Circles and Squares’, activity 2(a) – the poet’s context

**Teacher note:** depending on the class, this activity could be completed by students individually, in pairs or as a teacher guided joint annotation. The teacher may need to model how to annotate or provide verbal or written prompts on what students should be looking for. ‘**Circles and Squares’, resource 1 – think aloud** outlines how to approach a modelled think aloud activity. The information in this activity has been informed by the [Poetry International entry for Ali Cobby Eckermann](https://www.poetryinternational.com/en/poets-poems/poets/poet/102-18971_Cobby-Eckermann).

**Exploring Ali Cobby Eckermann’s biographical and cultural context**

When annotating the information about the author, think about what contextual influences from the authors life might be present in her poetry. For example, her cultural background, life experiences, and/or family. Think about what themes or concepts she might write about.

1. Read the following contextual information.
2. Highlight and annotate any words or phrases which you think tells us something about Ali Cobby Eckermann’s identity.
3. The first one has been done for you as an example of what to do.

Table 2 – about the poet

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| About the poet | Annotations |
| **As a baby, in 1963, Ali Cobby Eckermann was** adopted **by the Eckermann family. Ali struggled to connect with her traditional family, and it was not until she was helped by Link-Up, who help Aboriginal people impacted by the Stolen Generations, that she was able to locate her mother and her son, Jonnie. Ali identifies as a Yankunytjatjara woman born on Kaurna land. After living in the Northern Territory for almost thirty years, Ali moved to rural South Australia to be nearer to her traditional family. She chooses to live ‘intervention free’ in a village called Koolunga, where she is establishing an Aboriginal Writers Retreat. In addition, after being awarded a grant by the Australia Council, Ali is researching massacres in South Australia.** | The word **adopted** means that Cobby Eckermann was raised by another family. This suggests that she was either given up or taken away from her birth mother. |

## ‘Circles and Squares’, resource 1 – think aloud

**Teacher note:** EAL/D students may not be confident in annotating the text. Their annotations could be supported by the teacher using a think aloud strategy.

1. Model annotating using a [think aloud](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/literacy/speakinglistening/Pages/teachingpracmodelling.aspx).
2. Talk to students about the thinking process demonstrating how to do one or 2 annotations of the ‘about the poet’ paragraph as part of the **‘Circles and Squares,’ activity 2(a) – the poet’s context**.
3. Explain to students that the think aloud is a strategy in which readers verbalise their thoughts as they read and respond to texts. This could include:
4. **verbalising actions** – ‘I (the teacher) am going to identify a word or phrase which I think tells me something about Ali Cobby Eckermann’s cultural identity.’ For example, in the first line the word ‘adopted’. I think that this word draws attention to the fact that Cobby Eckermann was either given up or taken away from her natural mother.
5. **verbalising thoughts** – ‘Next, I am going to explain why I think the word or phrase reveals something about Cobby Eckermann’s identity. These words suggest to me that...’
6. **reading the text aloud** – ‘Now, I am going to re-read what I have written as an annotation and add any extra ideas.’

## ‘Circles and Squares’, activity 2(b) – prediction activity

**Teacher note:** use the quotes from the poet below to prompt discussion about contextual influences on the creation of texts as well as any clues as to themes that may be explored through the poetry. The quotations have been sourced from interviews with Ali Cobby Eckermann speaking to Jasmine Garsd, writing for ‘[The World’](https://theworld.org/stories/2017-11-01/meet-ali-cobby-eckermann-poet-who-writes-about-being-native-australia), and Stephanie Convery writing for ‘[The Guardian’](https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/mar/18/ali-cobby-eckermann-on-winning-the-worlds-richest-writing-prize-its-taken-time-to-adjust).

For EAL/D learners, providing detailed contextual knowledge is crucial as they would not have studied Australian history and may have little to no background knowledge of the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

**Ali Cobby Eckermann quotes**

The table below contains a range of direct quotes from the author. These quotes give insight into Cobby Eckermann’s experiences and the way she feels about those experiences.

1. Read the following comments made by Ali Cobby Eckermann.
2. The first set of annotations has been completed for you. Work your way through the rest of the quotations, making notes about any ideas that you find interesting or that provide hints as to what the poem might be about.

Table 3 – Ali Cobby Eckermann quotes

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Direct quote | Annotations |
| **‘You have to honor it and you have to feel it, and it** hurts. **And people will stop at a level of** pain**, and that’s where they become stuck. And you have to feel every iota of it to get to the other side. My poetry came out of** honoring my grief.’ **(Garsd 2017)** | There is a lexical chain of words (hurts, pain, grief) which suggest that Cobby Eckermann has experienced something which has impacted her in a negative way. But the repetition of ‘honor/honoring’ suggests that she has found a way to cope with her grief.  The poem might explore what event or series of events has caused her grief. |
| **‘For her adoptive mother — the woman who raised her, Frieda Eckermann — the poetry represents a different sorrow. “It really is sad now to see mum’s concern that I identify as a Stolen Generation person,” Ali Cobby Eckermann says. “Because in her heart, she wasn’t stealing anything. She was ... offering a home to children that she was told weren’t wanted. That’s our common bond. It’s that mum, Frieda, was tricked into believing something that wasn’t true. And my own birth mother was tricked out of keeping her firstborn child, which was me.’ (Garsd 2017)** |  |
| **‘In Australia, we could be walking down the street and the cops can pull us over, and search us, and belittle us, and frighten us. And there doesn’t need to be anything we’ve done. It’s just the fact that we’re Aboriginal people. We are the oldest living cultural continuum in the word. And we’re tired of living under the boot of Australia.’ (Garsd 2017)** |  |
| **At the age of 17 she ran away. ‘I didn’t really run away from my adopted family; I ran away from the adopted society that I was living in,’ she says. She made her way – instinctively, she says – to the desert (“I probably felt safer out there,” she says). (Convery 2020)** |  |
| **[On living with her son who she gave up for adoption after being reunited with him in Alice Springs] ‘I learned so much in that four years. I was starting to learn a little language, the old people were looking after me, mentoring culture and healing, and that was when the poetry started coming,’ she says. ‘I didn’t have to hold my guard up anymore.’ (Convery 2020)** |  |

**Reflect and predict**

1. Based on the information above, use this sentence starter to predict what the poem ‘Circles and Squares’ may be about. You should give at least 2 reasons (by referring to your annotations in the table above) to support your predictions.

I think the poem ‘Circles and Squares’ by Ali Cobby Eckermann will be about….because…

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## ‘Circles and Squares’, activity 3(a) – breaking down the title – idioms

**Teacher note:** EAL/D students may not have encountered English or Australian idioms before. Define what an idiom is for students and then facilitate a class discussion to determine if students know any idioms from their own culture. For example, the Arabic idiom [‘A pot that has found its lid’](https://www.tandem.net/blog/most-common-arabic-proverbs-and-idioms#:~:text=A%20pot%20that%20has%20found%20its%20lid.) means that when 2 people get along really well, they have found their other half. Sharing these cultural idioms will help students to both engage with and gain a deeper understanding of idioms. This will help to facilitate a clearer understanding of why Cobby Eckermann calls her poem, ‘Circles and Squares’

**Student note:** when annotating the title of the poem, think about what the individual words mean and what they could symbolise. Make connections to the contextual information about the author above if you can.

**Idioms**

The title ‘Circles and Squares’ relates to an old English idiom suggesting that something or someone does not fit in, ‘a square peg will not fit into a round hole.’

**An idiom can be defined as** ‘a commonly used phrase or expression, usually figurative or non-literal, that has an understood meaning specific to a language or dialect’, see the English K–10 Syllabus [Glossary](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022/glossary) (NESA 2022). For example, over the moon, half asleep, pull your socks up. The idiom, ‘over the moon’ means that someone is very happy. Discuss with a partner what you think the other idioms might mean.

1. Think of another idiom that you may have heard. This does not have to be an English or Australian idiom. For example, the Arabic idiom [‘A pot that has found its lid’](https://www.tandem.net/blog/most-common-arabic-proverbs-and-idioms#:~:text=A%20pot%20that%20has%20found%20its%20lid.) means that when 2 people get along really well, they have found their other half.
2. In the space below write the idiom and explain what it means.

An example of an idiom

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**Reflect**

1. Why do you think Ali Cobby Eckermann might have chosen to allude to the idiom ‘a square peg will not fit into a round hole’?

## ‘Circles and Squares’, activity 3(b) – breaking down the title – symbolism

**Symbolism**

**A symbol can be defined as** ‘an object, character or entity that can be understood to represent a larger idea, action or feeling. Depending on context, audience and purpose, symbols can have commonly agreed or reinforced associations, or they can be dynamic. Symbols can operate within texts, or they can serve as meaning-making devices of language in the real world’. See the English K–10 Syllabus [Glossary](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022/glossary) (NESA 2023).

1. Watch the video, [What is Symbolism? (0:59)](https://www.google.com/search?q=symbolism&sca_esv=571066675&rlz=1C1GCEA_enAU1042AU1042&tbm=vid&source=lnms&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjpiuXFjOCBAxUxTWwGHbRADlIQ_AUoA3oECAIQBQ&biw=1415&bih=910&dpr=1#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:68224647,vid:8Vwek28P9Gk,st:0). Stop the video at the 50 second mark.
2. The video talks about the different symbolic meanings of an apple. Discuss with your partner any other symbols that you can think of. For example, this might be a ‘heart’ which could have different meanings. This is usually dependent on the colour of the heart – think about the different coloured heart emojis. Even a colour can have a symbolic meaning. Can you think of the different symbolic meanings for the colour ‘red’?
3. Provide an example of a symbol and explain what the symbol represents.

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**Exit Ticket**

Answer the following questions below.

1. Why do you think Ali Cobby Eckermann has chosen to use shapes in the poem’s title? Consider your reflection on her use of idioms to help you.
2. What do you think Ali Cobby Eckermann’s poem is going to be about? Consider your responses to ‘the poets’ context’ and the ‘prediction activity’. Justify your answer.

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## Core Text – ‘Circles and Squares’ by Ali Cobby Eckermann

I was born Yankunytjatjara My mother is Yankunytjatjara Her mother is

Yankunytjatjara

My family is Yankunytjatjara

I have learnt many things from my Family Elders

I have grown to recognise that my life travels in Circles

My Aboriginal Culture has taught me that

Universal life is Circular

When I was born I was not allowed to live with my Family

I grew up in the white man’s world

We lived in a Square house

We picked fruit and vegetables from a neatly fenced Square plot

We kept animals in Square paddocks

We ate at Square tables

We sat on Square chairs

I slept in a Square bed

I looked at myself in a Square mirror and did not know who I was

One day I met my Mother

I just knew that this meeting was part of our Healing Circle

Then I began to travel

I visited places that I had been before

But this time I sat down with Family

We gathered closely Together by big Round campfires

We ate bush tucker feasting on Round ants and berries

We ate meat from animals that live in Round burrows

We slept in Circles on the beach around Our fires

We sat in the dirt on Our Land that belongs to a big Round planet

We watched the moon grow to a magnificent yellow Circle

That was our Time

I have learnt two different ways now

I am thankful for this

That is part of my Life Circle

My heart is Round like a drum ready to echo the Music of my Family

But the Square within me remains

The Square stops me in my entirety

## ‘Circles and Squares’, activity 4 – sketch to stretch

**Teacher note:** for EAL/D learners who are at the [‘Emerging’ or early ‘Developing’](https://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/EALD_Learning_Progression.pdf) phase, provide them with a copy of the poem prior to studying it in class so they can make notes or translations that will assist them in class.

Sketch to stretch is a comprehension strategy that allows students to visualise and demonstrate their understanding of text through drawing. It values creativity, diverse perspectives and encourages discussion. For the activity, allow students to first [listen to a reading of the poem (10:48)](https://youtu.be/bmDc6X1FKTc) and follow along. Then allow students to listen to the poem a second time, this time drawing images/symbols next to each stanza to demonstrate their understanding. Ask students to share their sketches with each other and discuss some commonly occurring visuals or symbols as a class. This will assist in building the field for the in-depth analysis of the poetry future lessons.

Make connections to the prediction activities and ask students to see if their predictions were accurate. Ask students if they can pull out any themes and so on.

**Introduction to the poem**

You are going to listen to Ali Cobby Eckermann reading ‘Circles and Squares’. As you listen to the poem think about the prediction activities that you have completed.

1. Was I right? Turn to one of your peers and have a short discussion reflecting on your predictions for what the poem might be about? Were you right? Are you unsure? If you’re not quite sure try to explain why you are not sure. This is perfectly fine. It often takes at least 2 readings of a poem before we can gain an understanding of the ideas or themes being shared.
2. Listen to the poem a second time. As you listen, draw or sketch a symbol or an image next to each stanza. This image should represent the ideas or themes in the stanza. This activity is not about being a fantastic artist! It is fine to draw symbols or shapes.
3. Share your sketches with a peer.
4. What are some of the commonly occurring symbols that you see?
5. Do the ideas or themes reflect your predictions?

## ‘Circles and Squares’, activity 5 – consolidating your ideas

**Teacher note:** it would be useful to provide students with a coloured copy of Plutchik’s [Emotion Wheel](https://www.berkeleywellbeing.com/emotion-wheel.html) to refer to as they study poetry to broaden their vocabulary around terms used to describe emotions. This would be particularly useful for EAL/D students.

Dependent on the class context, this could be done as a whole class task. Print the table below on an A3 sheet of paper (or larger if need be) and divide the class into smaller groups. Prompt students to respond to the questions. For example, you might set a timer for 7 minutes and ask each group to complete as much as they can, then pass their table to another group. Then set another timer for 5 minutes and ask students to read and add to it, repeating this process and decreasing the allocated time until students have had a turn at several tables. This could then be consolidated on the board with the teacher completing a ‘final’ version of the table. An alternative to using paper would be to create group tabs in a class Jamboard.

For EAL/D learners, it is important to provide opportunities in the classroom to develop confidence in speaking using academic English. By strategically grouping students for this activity, the teacher can provide this opportunity and model critical discussion in a low stakes’ environment.

**Consolidating your ideas**

On the next page you will find a table called ‘consolidating your ideas’.

1. Consider the questions in the first column. For example, the first cell is called ‘Contextual influence.’ There is a guiding question below this heading. To help you to respond to this question you might consider:
2. your annotations from **‘Circles and Squares’, activity 2(a) – the poet’s context and 2(b) – prediction activity**
3. your **‘sketch to stretch’** activity.
4. Try to answer the guiding question. This does not have to be full sentences; you are just jotting down your ideas. However, when you are asked to ‘justify’ you need to say why you think the way you do. When you are asked to support your answer, you need to find an example from the poem which ‘backs-up’ your idea.
5. Work your way through each of the questions. This activity will help you to consolidate your ideas before you begin to analyse the poem in more depth.

Table 4 – consolidating your ideas

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ****Questions**** | ****Student answers**** |
| Contextual influence  **How do you think the poet’s context has influenced her poem?** |  |
| Themes and messages  **What do you think the overall theme(s) or message(s) of the poem are? Justify your answer.** |  |
| Images and symbols  **Draw some of the key images or symbols that come to mind when reading the poem.** |  |
| Mood  **What mood do you think is created by this poem? Support your ideas with examples from the poem.** |  |

## ‘Circles and Squares’, resource 2 – reviewing poetic devices

**Teacher note:** the following resource outlines a range of activities that can be used to review poetic devices or to consolidate students understanding of the poetry being studied. These activities are optional. The resource booklet should be edited before being handed out to students to reflect what activities may be included/excluded. For example, if you are choosing to not use any of these activities, remove this entire resource from the booklet.

The sample poetic device flash cards should be modified for the needs of the class and the poetic devices chosen as a focus for the poem. These flash cards could be used to support the following activities:

* **Poetic device snap** – teacher to print and cut up flashcards (included in the table below). In pairs students play the traditional game of ‘snap’. This could be used with the flashcards in the Poetic Device column and **either the ‘Example from the poem’ column or the ‘Effect of the poetic device’ column – not both**.
* **Memory game** – teacher to print and cut up flashcards. In small groups or pairs students play a traditional ‘memory game’. This note could be used with Poetic device and either ‘Example from the poem’ or ‘Effect of the poetic device’, or all 3depending on how difficult or long you would like the activity to be.
* **Barrier game** – teacher to print the 2 versions of the table (ideally to fit on a single page). The versions should complement each other, with one missing section that the other has the answer for. In this activity, students will ask each other questions and try to fill in the blank sections on their sheet. Tables and student facing instructions are provided below.
* **Speedy match up** – students are given the flash cards cut up and mixed up, and it is a competition to see who can line up the correct device, example and effect the quickest.
* **Poetry bingo** – teacher to use the table below as a base to create ‘bingo cards’ and play a game of bingo, however, students would have to put a counter on the corresponding device, example or effect. For example, the teacher would call out ‘simile’ and students would either put a counter or mark the example from the poem or the effect of the technique if it appears on their bingo card.

Table 5 – poetic device flashcards

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Poetic device | Example from the poem | Effect of the poetic device |
| Reflective tone | What Cobby Eckermann has ‘learnt’, how she has ‘grown’ and what she has ‘realised’.  Cobby Eckermann understands the ‘two different ways’ she has ‘learnt’ to exist in this world. | In stanza 2, the reflective tone is used as Cobby Eckermann states what she has ‘learnt’, how she has ‘grown’ and what she has ‘realised’ and sets the tone for the narrative of her life to come that will explore her process of realisation.  In stanza 9 the poet returns to her reflective tone and tries to reconcile and understand the ‘two different ways’ she has ‘learnt’ to exist in this world. |
| Structure | Cobby Eckermann begins by immediately connecting with her Aboriginal identity, then recognises what she has learnt from her Family Elders. She then goes on to detail her childhood experience of growing up ‘white’ where she felt that she did not belong. In the second half of the poem, she outlines the impact reconnecting with her mother had and shares her experience of reconnecting with land and culture. She ends the poem by recognising that she exists in two worlds and that her identity will forever be complicated by this as she has realised that she can never fully belong to either. | Through utilising structure, Cobby Eckermann is able to engage the audience and take them on a detailed journey through her life as she attempts to navigate through her two worlds and reconcile them. The audience can reflect on her experiences as she connects her past and her present, and realise the complexity faced by those who have been forced to live in two worlds due to the consequences of systemic injustice and the lasting impact this has on generations of Aboriginal people. |
| Repetition | Matrilineal lineage and as being ‘Yankunytjatjara’  ‘we’ | The repetition use of the collective ‘we’ at the start of the first 5 lines of the stanza does indicate a connection with her white family, which begins to lay the foundations for the audience’s understanding of the complexity of the poet’s identity. |
| Personal pronouns | ‘I’ and ‘my’ | Highlights a deep personal connection. The poet recognises that she is part of something larger, a larger group, family, community and culture. |
| Symbolism | ‘Square mirror’ | The ‘Square’ is a complex symbolism as it can be interpreted both positively and negatively; representing stability, strong foundations, order, reliability as well as fixed ideas, being trapped, rigidity, old fashioned, limited viewpoints, lack of flexibility, conventional and so on.  The symbolism of the circle comes across as positive and could be seen to represent unity, wholeness, togetherness, perfection, being complete, belonging, healing, a journey and so on. |
| Positive connotations | ‘Closely together’, ‘feasting’ and ‘magnificent yellow Circle’. | The use of positive connotations highlights the nature of the connection Cobby Eckermann has to her Aboriginal family/culture vs her white upbringing. She makes clear that she feels a much deeper and more positive connection to this part of her identity. |
| Simile | ‘My heart is Round like a drum, ready to echo the music of my Family’ | The simile indicates that Cobby Eckermann is ready to commit herself to a deeper exploration of her Aboriginal family and culture. |
| Capitalisation | ‘Family Elders’  ‘Circles’  ‘Aboriginal Culture’  ‘Square’  ‘Mother’  ‘Healing Circle’  ‘Together’  ‘Our Land’ | The use of capitalisation throughout the poem for words/phrases that would not normally have a capital is significant and deliberate. The capitalisation draws audience attention to what is important to the poet, what she values and what has had an impact on her. |

**Barrier game activity**

**The aim of this game is to communicate with your partner to complete the missing sections of information on your worksheet, you should draw on your knowledge of the poem ‘Circles and Squares’ to assist you. To play the barrier game, follow the instructions below.**

1. **Find a partner and make sure one of you has the ‘student 1 table’ and the other has the ‘student 2 table’. You will also need a copy of the poem to refer to.**
2. **Take a moment to read through the tables. You will notice that there are pieces of information missing. Your partner’s sheet will have the information you are missing, and you will have the information they are missing.**
3. **Each of you should take some time to complete the blanks to the best of your ability. Aim for approximately 10–15 minutes. Do not communicate with your partner during this time.**
4. **Once you are both ready to check your answers, sit across from each other ensuring that you cannot see each other’s worksheets.**
5. **You will now go row by row down the table sharing and checking your answers.**

**For example, student 2 should start by describing the poetic device ‘Reflective tone’ and then asking student 1 to give an example of this poetic device form the poem. Student 1 should read their answer and student 2 should check this against the answer they have. Provide praise if they are correct and if they are not, give them a clue that will help them find the correct answer.**

1. **Repeat this process for the rest of the table, alternating as you go.**

Table 6 – barrier game – student 1 table

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Poetic device | Example from the poem | Effect of the poetic device |
| Reflective tone |  | In stanza 2, the reflective tone used as Cobby Eckermann states what she has ‘learnt’, how she has ‘grown’ and what she has ‘realised’ sets the tone for the narrative of her life to come that will explore her process of realisation.  In stanza 9 the poet returns to her reflective tone and tries to reconcile and understand the ‘two different ways’ she has ‘learnt’ to exist in this world. |
| Narrative structure | She begins by immediately connecting with her Aboriginal identity, then recognises what she has learnt from her Family Elders. She then goes on to detail her childhood experience of growing up ‘white’ where she felt that she did not belong. In the second half of the poem she outlines the impact reconnecting with her mother had and shares her experience of reconnecting with land and culture. She ends the poem by recognising that she exists in two worlds and that her identity will forever be complicated by this as she has realised that she can never fully belong to either. | Through utilising narrative structure, Cobby Eckermann is able to engage the audience and take them on a detailed journey through her life as she attempts to navigate through her two worlds and reconcile them. The audience can reflect on her experiences as she connects her past and her present, and realise the complexity faced by those who have been forced to live in two worlds due to the consequences of systemic injustice and the lasting impact this has on generations of Aboriginal people. |
| Repetition | Matrilineal lineage ‘Yankunytjatjara’ |  |
| Personal pronouns | ‘I’ and ‘my’ | Highlights a deep personal connection. The poet recognises that she is part of something larger, a larger group, family, community and culture. |
| Symbolism | ‘Healing Circle’ | The symbolism of the circle comes across as positive and could be seen to represent unity, wholeness, togetherness, perfection, being complete, belonging, healing, a journey. |
| **[Student to insert answer]** | ‘Closely together’/‘feasting’ and ‘magnificent yellow Circle’ | The use of [Student to insert answer] highlights the nature of the connection Cobby Eckermann has to her Aboriginal family/culture vs her white upbringing. She makes clear that she feels a much deeper and more positive connection to this part of her identity. |
| Simile | ‘My heart is Round like a drum, ready to echo the music of my Family’ | The simile indicates that Cobby Eckermann is ready to commit herself to a deeper exploration of her Aboriginal family and culture. |
| Capitalisation | ‘Family Elders’  ‘Circles’  ‘Aboriginal Culture’  ‘Square’  ‘Mother’  ‘Healing Circle’  ‘Together’  ‘Our Land’ |  |

Table 7 – barrier game – student 2 table

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Poetic device | Example from the poem | Effect of the poetic device |
| Reflective tone | What Cobby Eckermann has ‘learnt’, how she has ‘grown’ and what she has ‘realised’. Cobby Eckermann understands the ‘two different ways’ she has ‘learnt’ to exist in this world. | In stanza 2, the reflective tone used as Cobby Eckermann states what she has ‘learnt’, how she has ‘grown’ and what she has ‘realised’ sets the tone for the narrative of her life to come that will explore her process of realisation.  In stanza 9 the poet returns to her reflective tone and tries to reconcile and understand the ‘two different ways’ she has ‘learnt’ to exist in this world. |
| Narrative structure | She begins by immediately connecting with her Aboriginal identity, then recognises what she has learnt from her Family Elders. She then goes on to detail her childhood experience of growing up ‘white’ where she felt that she did not belong. In the second half of the poem she outlines the impact reconnecting with her mother had and shares her experience of reconnecting with land and culture. She ends the poem by recognising that she exists in two worlds and that her identity will forever be complicated by this as she has realised that she can never fully belong to either. | Through utilising [student to insert answer], Cobby Eckermann is able to engage the audience and take them on a detailed journey through her life as she attempts to navigate through her two worlds and reconcile them. The audience can reflect on her experiences as she connects her past and her present, and realise the complexity faced by those who have been forced to live in two worlds due to the consequences of systemic injustice and the lasting impact this has on generations of Aboriginal people. |
| Repetition | Matrilineal lineage ‘Yankunytjatjara’ | The repetition of the collective ‘we’ at the start of the first 5 lines of the stanza does indicate a connection with her white family, which begins to lay the foundations for the audiences understanding of the complexity of the poet’s identity. |
| Personal pronouns | ‘I’ and ‘my’ |  |
| Symbolism | ‘Healing Circle’ |  |
| Positive connotation | ‘Closely together’, ‘feasting’ and ‘magnificent yellow Circle’ | The use of positive connotation highlights the nature of the connection Cobby Eckermann has to her Aboriginal family/culture vs her white upbringing. She makes clear that she feels a much deeper and more positive connection to this part of her identity. |
| Simile |  | The simile indicates that Cobby Eckermann is ready to commit herself to a deeper exploration of her Aboriginal family and culture. |
| Capitalisation | ‘Family Elders’  ‘Circles’  ‘Aboriginal Culture’  ‘Square’  ‘Mother’  ‘Healing Circle’  ‘Together’  ‘Our Land’ | The use of capitalisation throughout the poem for words/phrases that would not normally have a capital is significant and deliberate. The capital letter draws audience attention to what is important to the poet, what she values and what has had an impact on her. |

## ‘Circles and Squares’, activity 6 – guided annotation

**Teacher Note:** it may be necessary to provide intensive individual or small group support for EAL/D students. Consider pairing EAL/D students with peers who have completed annotation activities before. Ideally students would have access to a range of coloured highlighters and/or pens to complete their annotations. You will need to model the process of annotation asking guiding questions to assist students in contributing to the process. Dependent on the class context, the teacher may like to use the [Gradual release of responsibility framework](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/teaching-and-learning-resources/literacy/effective-reading-in-the-early-years-of-school/comprehension#:~:text=The%20Gradual%20release%20of%20responsibility%20model%20is%20a%20helpful%20framework%20to%20understand%20what%20explicit%20instruction%20can%20look%20like%20when%20teaching%20reading.) whilst modelling annotating the poem and then consolidate through class discussion.

**A close reading of the poem**

You are going to do a close reading of the poem and make detailed annotations.

**Student note:** it would be useful to have your prediction and sketch to stretch responses handy to help you to consolidate some of your ideas. For example, Cobby Eckermann uses the word ‘circle’ several times. The excerpts and quotations that you looked at in these activities will help you to think about what the word ‘circle’ might represent in the poem.

1. Read through the poem again. You can read the poem using the table below or you can use your sketch to stretch activity.
2. Now, use the annotations table and perform a close reading of each stanza.
3. Annotate each stanza identifying at least 2 poetic devices in each stanza. The first row of the table has been done for you.
4. As you read through each stanza, use the following questions to guide your annotations:
5. What do you think this stanza is trying to tell you?
6. What kind of poetic devices are used?
7. What can you infer about the use of the poetic device?
8. What else might help you decide what the poetic device might represent? Think about your prediction and sketch to stretch activities.
9. Make a decision and write it down. It is perfectly fine to run your ideas by your peers and your teacher.
10. Your thought process might look a little like this.
11. Cobby Eckermann repeats the word ‘Yankunytjatjara’. Why does she do this? When something is repeated it usually means that the author wants to highlight an idea. Cobby Eckermann repeats Yankunytjatjara’ 4 times in the first stanza. We know from Cobby Eckermann’s personal context that she is Aboriginal and that she was adopted. The repetition seems to suggest that Cobby Eckermann considers her Aboriginal heritage very important.
12. Cobby Eckermann moves through a range of pronouns from ‘I’ to ‘my’ to ‘her’ and finally to ‘my’ again. Why does she do this? The use of ‘I’, ‘her’ and ‘my’ suggests that Cobby Eckermann is drawing a clear familial and generational connection to her culture.

Table 8 – ‘Circles and Squares’ – annotations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Poem | Annotations |
| I **was born** Yankunytjatjara My **mother is Yankunytjatjara** Her **mother is Yankunytjatjara**  My **family is Yankunytjatjara** | **Repetition** – ‘Yankunytjatjara’ is repeated several times. This draws the reader’s attention to Cobby Eckermann’s Aboriginal heritage. The repetition reinforces how important her heritage is to her.  **Personal and inclusive pronouns** – Cobby Eckermann’s use of pronouns moving from a personal to inclusive pronoun highlights her familial and generational connection to her culture. |
| **I have learnt many things from my Family Elders**  **I have grown to recognise that my life travels in Circles**  **My Aboriginal Culture has taught me that**  **Universal life is Circular** |  |
| **When I was born I was not allowed to live with my Family**  **I grew up in the white man’s world** |  |
| **We lived in a Square house**  **We picked fruit and vegetables from a neatly fenced Square plot**  **We kept animals in Square paddocks**  **We ate at Square tables**  **We sat on Square chairs**  **I slept in a Square bed** |  |
| **I looked at myself in a Square mirror and did not know who I was** |  |
| **One day I met my Mother**  **I just knew that this meeting was part of our Healing Circle**  **Then I began to travel**  **I visited places that I had been before**  **But this time I sat down with Family** |  |
| **We gathered closely together by big Round campfires**  **We ate bush tucker feasting on Round ants and berries**  **We ate meat from animals that live in Round burrows**  **We slept in Circles on the beach around Our fires**  **We sat in the dirt on Our Land that belongs to a big Round planet**  **We watched the moon grow to a magnificent yellow Circle**  **That was our Time** |  |
| **I have learnt two different ways now**  **I am thankful for this**  **That is part of my Life Circle** |  |
| **My heart is Round like a drum ready to echo the Music of my Family** |  |
| **But the Square within me remains**  **The Square stops me in my entirety** |  |

## ‘Circles and Squares’, activity 7 – exploring symbolism

**Teacher note:** this activity can be completed by students individually, in small groups or as a class. The level of intervention is dependent on the context of the class. Refer students back to **‘Circles and Squares, activity 3(b) – breaking down the title – symbolism**.

**Reflecting personally**

You have reflected on what Cobby Eckermann’s purpose might have been in choosing to call her poem ‘Circles and Squares’. This activity, together with your close reading of the poem, should have provided you with a deeper understanding of what these 2 symbols represent. You are going to complete a series of activities which will support your understanding of the ways in which poetry prompts us to make connections and to broaden our view of others and the world.

1. On the next 2 pages you will find an image of a circle and a square. Thinking carefully about how Cobby Eckermann uses these symbols to represent 2 distinct identities, consider how these ideas might exist in **your** world. This might be a very personal activity for you – you are being asked to think carefully about times you might feel conflicted or struggle to fit in. You do not have to be too detailed, a few words will be fine. For example, ‘at home I have to speak in my cultural language, but at school I have to speak Australian English to fit in’, or maybe, ‘at home I like to game a lot, but I don’t mention this at school as I don’t want my peers to laugh at me.’ Use the circle and square shapes below to separate these conflicting identities. You can use the following prompts to guide you:
2. Do you feel like there are 2 parts of your life which you find difficult to reconcile?
3. Do you feel like you have to behave or act a certain way in one aspect of your life but behave or act a certain way in another?

Figure 1 – circle

Figure 2 – square

1. Your teacher will facilitate a class discussion so that you can share your ideas with the class. If you feel comfortable you should contribute. It is very likely that some of your peers experience the same kinds of worries or fears that you do.
2. Complete the [Same Different Connect Engage](https://pz.harvard.edu/resources/same-different-connect-engage) activity in the table below.

**Teacher note:** the [Same Different Connect Engage](https://pz.harvard.edu/resources/same-different-connect-engage) activity, adapted from a Harvard Project Zero Thinking Routine of the same name, is designed to engender empathetic perspective taking. Here students are being asked to reflect on their own experience, and to try to empathise with Cobby Eckermann’s life experience.

Table 9 – Same Different Connect Engage

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Same Different Connect Engage | Response |
| Same**: In what ways might you and Ali Cobby Eckermann be similar? This does not have to be literal. Have you experienced a time when you have struggled to fit in?** |  |
| Different**: In what ways might you and Ali Cobby Eckermann differ? Again, this does not have to be literal.** |  |
| Connect: **In what ways might you and Ali Cobby Eckermann be connected as human beings? Think about what drives us all as human beings, the need to connect or to belong.** |  |
| Engage: **What would you ask Ali Cobby Eckermann if you had the chance?** |  |

1. You are now going to complete the table below.
2. Refer back to your **‘Circles and Squares, activity 3(b) – breaking down the title – symbolism**.
3. Refer to your own understanding of what each shape represents in **your** world.
4. Consider your Same Different Connect Engage responses.
5. Refer to your annotations of the poem.
6. Use the table below to consolidate and create a visual representation of what these shapes represent in Cobby Eckermann’s poem.

Table 10 – transferring knowledge

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What docircles represent in Cobby Eckermann’s poem? Include examples. | What dosquares represent in Cobby Eckermann’s poem? Include examples. |
|  |  |

## ‘Circles and Squares, activity 8 – mapping themes

**Teacher note:** this activity will support students to develop a deeper understanding of Cobby Eckermann’s thematic concerns. An initial class discussion and brainstorm will support students to navigate the different thematic concerns in the poem. Dependent on the context of the class the mapping activity could be completed in pairs or small groups with each group allocated a specific theme, this could then be photocopied and shared amongst the class. The English K–10 Syllabus ['Glossary](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022/glossary)’ defines theme as ‘an overarching or recurring idea that describes attitudes or values that are perceived in a text. A theme may range from the understood ‘moral’ of a text to philosophical observations that the audience makes about the events, characters and experiences depicted in a text. A text may have more than one theme’. Suggested themes might include:

a strong personal identity is important for a sense of belonging

familial and cultural connection forms part of our identity

loss of cultural connection impacts our sense of belonging and identity

connection to land strengthens cultural identity.

Using these same thematic concerns for the class discussion and brainstorm activity will provide a scaffold for students to build on and to contribute their own ideas.

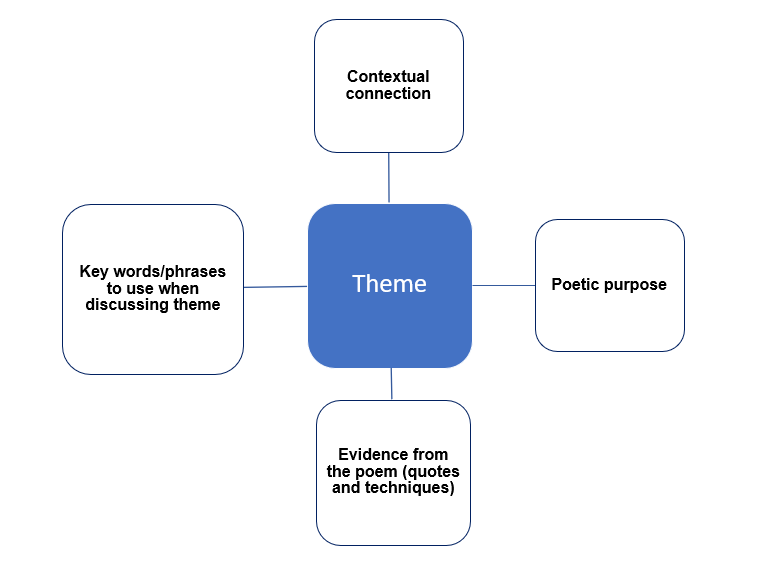
**Student note:** in this activity you are going to explore the thematic concerns which are present in Cobby Eckermann’s poem. Your teacher will guide a class discussion exploring the themes:

* a strong personal identity is important for a sense of belonging
* familial and cultural connection forms part of our identity
* loss of cultural connection impacts our sense of belonging and identity
* connection to land strengthens cultural identity.

Try to contribute your ideas to the discussion and make sure that you make a copy of the brainstorm on the whiteboard into your books. You will be able to refer to this brainstorm as you complete the mapping activity.

1. Complete the mapping activity on the next page.
2. Use the mapping template to respond to each theme (so you will complete the mapping activity 4 times).
3. If you have identified another theme in the poem, you could (and should) complete the mapping activity for this theme too.
4. Use the prompts on the mapping template to structure your ideas. For example, in the box for ‘poetic purpose’ you might explore Cobby Eckermann’s purpose in writing about why a strong personal identity is important for a sense a belonging. You could also refer to your responses in the Same Different Connection Engage activity.

Figure 3 – mapping themes



**Reflection**

1. Choose one of the themes you have explored. Read the following question and then use the lines below to write your response.

What does the poem reveal about culture, identity or experience?

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## Core formative task 3 – analytical paragraph

**Teacher note:** this core formative task provides steps that can be used in the planning of the paragraph. There is an opportunity here to integrate any specific writing scaffolds or structures that are included within your School Improvement Plan as part of a whole-school writing focus, such as ALARM or PEEL. There is also an opportunity to add in planning steps dependent on the needs of your students. This could include sentence-level and word-level strategies such as connectives or nominalisation. You may also want to provide some word banks to support students with vocabulary selection. Use and adapt this planning template and formative task as required for your students.

**Student note:** the steps provided in this task are one approach that you could take to planning a response. In your formal assessment task, you will need to demonstrate detailed knowledge of the poems you have studied. Knowing how to scaffold your thinking and making deep connections between the ideas expressed in the poems and how they are expressed will help you when you get to the assessment task.

1. You are going to answer the question in the box below. Your answer will be in the form of an analytical paragraph. Use the steps outlined to plan for and then compose your answer.

**Question**

How do Aboriginal poets use figurative language to represent their culture, identity and experiences?

### **Identifying the demands of the question**

1. Use the questions in the table below to clarify the key words in the question and brainstorm ways to address the key words.

Table 11 – identifying the demands of the question

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Breaking down the question | Planning notes |
| **What do the words ‘culture’, ‘identity’ and ‘experiences’ mean? What do they specifically refer to in the poems you have studied?**  **Why do you think Aboriginal poets write about culture, identity and their experiences?** |  |
| **What theme(s) are explored through the poetry? What connection do these have to ‘identity, culture and experiences’?** |  |
| **What does ‘represent’ mean? What are some synonyms for ‘represent’?** |  |
| **If the poets are ‘representing’ their ‘culture, identity and experiences’, what is their purpose in doing so? What impact might this have on audiences?**  **Is it a way for the poets to navigate/come to terms with/understand/explore their connection to culture, identity and experiences?**  **Does it challenge the audiences’ understanding of Australian history?**  **Does it force audiences to reflect on historical injustices and the lasting consequences?** |  |
| **The word ‘how’ in the question indicates that your answer should refer to the language forms and features used in the poem. What are some of the language forms and features used that could support your answer to this question?** |  |

1. In your own words, on the lines below, write what you think the question is asking.

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### Planning a topic sentence

1. Now that you have identified the key demands of the question, draft your topic sentence using the space below. Make sure to directly answer the question. Don’t include supporting information as that will be included in your following sentences.

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1. Now that you have written a topic sentence, try to expand it by adding in a noun group or adverbial phrase. Annotate your sentence above with suggestions for where you can expand it.

### Planning your supporting evidence

Using the table below, identify some possible examples that you could use to support your answer. You do not need to use all of these in your answer. However, it is good to have lots of options.

In the first column, write in a direct quote(s) from the poem, identify the figurative language used, state whether the quote(s) reference culture, identity or experiences and state any connection to theme.

In the second column, explain how the quote selected could be used to support how Aboriginal poets use figurative language to represent their culture, identity and experiences through their poetry.

Table 12 – planning your supporting evidence

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Example from the poem | How the example could support your answer |
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### Student-facing rubric – ‘what does a good paragraph look like?’

**Before you begin writing your paragraph**

1. Read the following student-facing rubric before you commence writing your analytical paragraph. This will allow you to write with purpose and to ensure that all the necessary elements of analytical writing have been included.

Table 13 – analytical paragraph student-facing rubric

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Element | I am starting to see this in my paragraph | I can see this developing in my paragraph | I can see this clearly in my paragraph |
| Thesis or topic sentence | You have provided some information but there is not a clear answer to the question. Your next step is to review the key words in the question and write a topic sentence that uses these words. | You are engaging with the question but have not yet introduced your arguments. The next step is to introduce some points you will argue about the main topics of the question. | Your thesis addresses the question clearly and contains some sub-ideas showing a strong exploration of the key ideas that will inform the rest of your paragraph. |
| Paragraph structure | You have some ideas about the topic but have not yet used the paragraph structure to develop your ideas. The scaffold provided will help you to structure a full paragraph. | You have all the elements, but they are not always in the right order. You could work on starting with the big ideas, then moving into examples from your poem followed by analysis. | Your paragraph starts with a thesis and moves into subpoints, with evidence from the poem and integrated analysis sentences. |
| Signposting (connection to question) | You are using words from the question directly at the start of your response only. Linking back to the words of the question throughout will help you answer the question more thoroughly. | You are using words from the question directly throughout your response. You could use synonyms and other related words. | You are using synonyms and other related words throughout your response to consistently engage with the question. |
| Evidence (examples from the poem) | There is information from the text that shows you understand the poem and the question, but you need to include direct quotes. | There is at least one quote from the poem that relates well to the question. You could use some other examples from the poem and try to link them clearly to the question in your writing. | You have used several well-selected pieces of evidence from the poem, they are integrated well in sentences, and have specific analysis relating back to the question each time. |
| Sentence-level grammar and punctuation | You are using simple sentences. While there is some punctuation there is opportunity to review your full stops, capital letters and commas prior to submitting your work. | There are some examples of compound and/or complex sentences in your work. Make sure to do a final grammar and punctuation check and see if there is opportunity to combine or split a few of your sentences. | You are using a range of different sentences, have effectively punctuated and adhered to the conventions of grammar for a formal written piece. |

### Composing your response

**Teacher note:** depending on the needs of your students, you may choose to provide a paragraph scaffold based on your school writing focus, such as ALARM or PEEL as well as word banks to support vocabulary selection. For EAL/D students, the scaffold will need to be detailed with clear prompts for each letter used in your chosen acronym.

1. Now that you have planned what your response could include, use the space below to write your paragraph.

**Question**

How do Aboriginal poets use figurative language to represent their culture, identity and experiences?

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### Reflecting on your response

**Teacher note:** where appropriate, you may ask students to peer mark/review each other’s responses before reflecting, using the checklist and questions below (provide students with a simple, student-friendly peer marking guide, ideally based around your school writing focus). This will assist students who may not be able to articulate their thoughts and help them identify areas of improvement.

1. Reflect by answering the following questions.
2. What is one thing that you have done well in your paragraph?

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1. What is one thing that you could work on in the next paragraph you write?

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1. How did your detailed planning of this paragraph inform the decisions you made about what to include in your paragraph?

|  |
| --- |
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|  |

1. What did you learn from the process of peer reviewing responses? What is something you took on from this and incorporated into your paragraph? [Only include this question if peer review was done.]

|  |
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## ‘Circles and Squares’, activity 9 – multimodal presentation

**Teacher note:** thisactivity could take 2–3 lessons**.** Teachers might choose to complete the task in its entirety or choose to do single elements of the task. Alternatively, if students have already completed **Core formative task 4 – informative dialogue** with another poem, teachers may opt to do this task instead of doing the core formative task again.

This activity can be done individually, in pairs or as a whole class. Make a decision based on the context of the class. Students should choose one stanza from the poem. Alternatively, and to ensure that all stanzas are represented, teachers could assign each group a specific stanza.

The department’s [Technology 4 Learning website](https://t4l.schools.nsw.gov.au/) contains a range of resources which students can access to create their multimodal presentation; however, a PowerPoint presentation would suffice as it provides an opportunity to include narration. Students should use the same platform as the teacher to ensure the different sections can be easily combined.

1. You will work in small groups to create a multimodal presentation for the poem ‘Circles and Squares’ by Ali Cobby Eckermann.

Your teacher will guide you on how to approach this activity. You might choose your own stanza to work on, or your teacher might allocate you a stanza.

The English K–10 ‘[Glossary](https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022/glossary)’ defines a multimodal text as a text that combines 2 or more expressive modes to communicate. Depending on the platform that is used to create your multimodal presentation, this might involve combining images and text or perhaps be a combination of speaking, images and text. It is up to you and the limits of the platform used to complete the task. At the conclusion of the task, all the presentations will be combined to create a multimodal presentation which will be viewed by the class. You will be able to use this presentation as support when completing the assessment task.

Breaking down your stanza

1. In your group, use thestanza planning template below to discuss, draw and make note of any significant visuals that the stanza evokes as well as any poetic devices that are present. You should refer to your **‘guided annotation’** table and your **‘analytical paragraph’** to help you. It is a good idea to go back and refer to the other activities you have previously completed and collate any notes you already have on your stanza.
2. Identify examples from the text.
3. Identify the poetic device used.
4. Decide what the effect or impact of the poetic device is. What idea or concept do you think it represents.
5. The first row has been completed for you (you still need to identify 3 more).

Table 14 – stanza planning template

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Textual evidence | Poetic device | Effect or impact |
| **‘campfires…burrows…**  **beach…dirt…moon’** | Lexical chain – nature related words | Used to reinforce Aboriginal **cultural connection** to the land (juxtaposed with ‘house…plot…paddock…  mirror’ which are symbols of Western culture. |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
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**Teacher note:** a table has been included but there are a range of graphic organisers that students can use, particularly if a more visual representation of ideas would support your students. The department’s Digital Learning Selector contains a range of possible [graphic organisers](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/599?clearCache=714e9796-eed3-6580-f06a-3db946c397c4).

### Drafting your presentation

1. Now that you have collected all your ideas, you should start to put together your presentation. Remember that your presentation must include 2 different modes of communication.

**Visual features**

* Your stanza (exactly as it appears in the original poem)
* Visuals relevant to your stanza
* Annotations that clearly state poetic devices.

Be thoughtful about your composition. Consider colour, font, size, layout and so on. It is a good idea to consider the mood and tone of the stanza when making these aesthetic decisions.

**Audio features**

* A reading of the stanza
* A discussion of the poetic devices and their effect as justification of the visuals you have included.

You may choose to use the table below to assign roles to your group members – consider each members’ strengths and interests when assigning these. It is important to be equitable in the distribution of these roles.

Table 15 – assigning responsibilities

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Group Member | Responsibility |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

### Writing your transcript

A transcript is a written copy of what you will say in your presentation. Again, it is a good idea to have a transcript to refer to as you record the voice over that will accompany the visuals in your presentation. This will help to keep you on track.

Your transcript should include:

* a reading of the stanza
* an overall comment about the main ideas and/or concepts of the stanza
* a discussion and justification of your choice of visuals
* identification of poetic techniques and their effect.

1. You should complete the transcript collaboratively with your group and show your teacher a draft for feedback before recording. Each member of the group must be involved in the delivery of the transcript.

Be mindful of your tone, pace, pronunciation and use of pauses. You might like to refer to **Phase 6, resource 7 – spoken devices**. Use any features of your presentation platform to assist your audience in following along.

Table 16 – transcript scaffold

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Prompts | Responses | Student(s) responsible |
| **Include the text of your stanza exactly as it appears in the original poem.** |  |  |
| **Make an overall comment about the stanza. Consider the purpose of the stanza – what message do you think that Cobby Eckermann is trying to convey?** |  |  |
| **For each poetic device:**   * **clearly identify the key poetic device(s) present in the stanza and their overall purpose in the context of the poem. For example, Ali Cobby Eckermann uses lexical chains to reflect her split identity, ’campfires/burrows/beaches’ and ‘house/plot/paddock’.** |  |  |
| Justify your choice of visuals:   * explain why you chose each image, symbol, colour, size, and so on * make connections to the overall message or conceptual focus of the stanza. |  |  |
| Clearly explain why this poetic device has been used and the impact it has on the audience.  For example, ‘Ali Cobby Eckermann’s use of lexical chains in stanzas 4 and 6, highlights the different cultural identities Cobby Eckermann must navigate, inviting the audience to consider the different cultural attitudes to the natural world. |  |  |
| Link the use of these poetic devices back to the overall message and/or conceptual focus of the stanza. |  |  |
| Personal reflection: this could include your opinion of the poem, any personal connection you have been able to make, and how the poem has expanded your thinking of the world. |  |  |

### Reflecting and submission

1. Once you have recorded the transcript over the visual presentation, critically review as a group and note areas for improvement.

Consider the following questions to guide your reflection.

* Have all parts of the task been addressed?
* Are the visuals clear, effective and relevant to the stanza?
* Is all information accessible (can it be easily seen, is it overcrowded, are there too many animations, and so on)?
* Is the delivery of the transcript clear (appropriate pace, tone, volume and use of pauses)?
* Have all members contributed equally?

1. Submit your presentation. Your teacher will guide you as to how and where to submit it.

### Putting it all together

Your teacher will put all the presentations together and you will view the multimodal presentation as a class.

## ‘Circles and Squares’, core formative task 4 – informative dialogue

You are going to work in groups of 3 to record audio of a conversation about a poem you have studied in class. Your conversation will be in an informative form and you will be required to contribute ideas, thoughts and reflections to a conversation with your group that is approximately 3 minutes long.

Use the steps outlined below to plan for your recording.

**Teacher note:** this core formative task provides steps that can be used in the planning of the informative dialogue. There is an opportunity to supplement this task by incorporating or referring students to **Core formative task 1 – listening task 2,** **Phase 6, resource 1 – structural conventions of a podcast**, **Phase 6, activity 2 – podcast writing guide**, **Phase 6, resource 8 – production devices** and **Phase 6, activity 10 – podcast recording self-assessment checklist** as additional activities to help prepare for this core formative task. Teachers and students would also benefit from exploring the [The Student Podcaster website](https://t4l.schools.nsw.gov.au/resources/teaching-and-learning-resources/the-student-podcaster.html). This website contains a range of modules designed to support teachers in teaching structural conventions of a podcast. The length of the recording could be adapted if necessary to suit your contextual context.

**Student note:** the steps provided in this task are one approach that you could take to plan a discursive conversation. In your formal assessment task, you will need to demonstrate detailed knowledge of the poems you have studied (through verbal and written expression). Knowing how to scaffold your thinking and making deep connections between the ideas expressed in the poems and how they are expressed will help you in the assessment task.

1. You are going to work in groups of 3 to produce and record a short informative conversation about a poem you have studied in class. This recording will only include the audio aspect of your conversation. This is not a filmed version of your conversation. Your conversation will be informative, and you will be required to contribute ideas, thoughts and reflections to an approximately 3-minute conversation with your group. Each group member should contribute a minute’s worth of content for this task.
2. You will discuss the poet’s use of language forms, features and structures for particular effect. You may wish to explore the poet’s unique style and the way they have used this to affirm or challenge established cultural attitudes and values.

Use the following discussion points:

* the complexities of personal identity
* the connection between family and cultural identity
* representation of cultural connection.

Use the steps outlined below to plan for your recording.

**Step 1 – collaborate with your group**

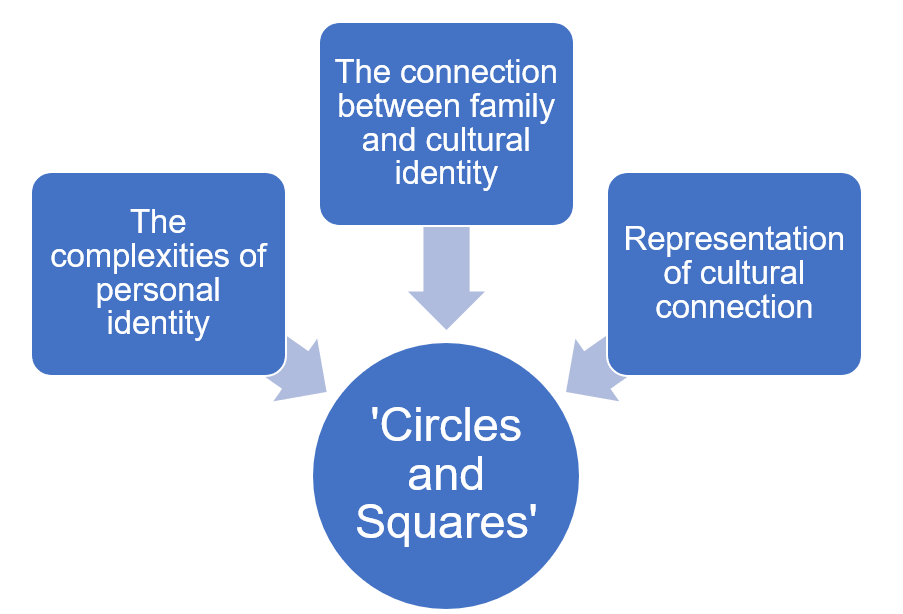
1. Meet with your group to:
2. discuss the poem and how it is used to affirm or challenge established cultural attitudes and values
3. allocate a discussion point for each group member.

**Step 2 – planning your informative dialogue**

Given your time limit and the need to ensure all members of the group participate equally, it is important to have key discussion points to cover that will guide your discursive conversation. Use the template below to brainstorm ideas.

1. Choose one discussion point per group member. Remember that each group member has one minute of allocated time. Use the template below to brainstorm ideas as a group before you focus on your discussion point.

Figure 4 – planning your discussion points



1. Now that you have your ideas, use the table to record some of your individual responses, allocate roles and consider use of audio effects.

**Student note:** although you are making note of appropriate audio events that would enhance your informative dialogue, you are not required to integrate them in your 3-minute recording for this task. The purpose of completing column ‘Audio effects’ is to consider ways to effectively transition from one idea to the next or to enhance engagement by drawing on your understanding of podcast conventions.

Table 17 – organising your ideas

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Discussion points | Planning notes | Roles | Audio effects |
| **Point 1:** |  | Student 1: take the lead  Student 2 and 3: interject with ideas |  |
| **Point 2:** |  | Student 2: take the lead  Student 1 and 3: interject with ideas |  |
| **Point 3:** |  | Student 3: to take the lead  Student 1 and 2: interject with ideas |  |

**Step 3 – practice conversation and run sheet**

1. Sit with your group and share the notes you have individually made in the table around the discussion points. It is a good idea to take note of any similarities or differences in opinion as you may choose to comment on these through your discussion. Also make some decisions around any sound effects and music that you agree to use.

While your recorded audio conversation should remain free and flexible, it will be useful to have a run sheet to keep you on track. Use the table below to plan your conversation in more detail.

**Teacher note:** it will be important to define ‘segue’ for students: is a verb that means ‘to move without stopping from one topic, song or other aspect to another’. Refer students to **Phase 1, activity 5 – podcast jargon**. It is also at teacher discretion as to which ICT platform students will use for this task. Ideally it would mirror what would be used for the assessment task to allow students to become familiar with the platform. Students are not required to generate these audios segues or transitions. They are only required to note down a plan for how they might be used.

Table 18 – run sheet planner

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Section | Content | Group member responsible | Audio effects |
| Introduction | * Introduce speakers * Introduce the poet and poem * Introduce the focus for the conversation | Group to negotiate |  |
| ****Segue into Discussion point 1**** | * Student 1 to segue from introduction to the first discussion point * Consider making a connection between ideas to assist in this | Student 1 |  |
| Discussion point 1 | * Student 1 to start by introducing the discussion point and giving their thoughts, feelings, reflections and so on * Student 2 and 3 to interject with own ideas | Student 1: take the lead  Student 2 and 3: interject with ideas. |  |
| ****Segue into Discussion point 2**** | * Student 2 to segue from discussion point 1 into point 2 * Consider making a connection between ideas to assist in this | Student 2 |  |
| Discussion Point 2 | * Student 2 to start by introducing the discussion point and giving their thoughts, feelings, reflections and so on * Student 2 and 3 to interject with own ideas | Student 2: take the lead  Student 1 and 3: interject with ideas |  |
| ****Segue into Discussion point 3**** | * Student 3 to segue from discussion point 2 into point 3 * Consider making a connection between ideas to assist in this | Student 3 |  |
| Discussion point 3 | * Student 3 to start by introducing the discussion point and giving their thoughts, feelings, reflections and so on. * Student 1 and 2 to interject with own ideas | Student 3: take the lead  Student 1 and 2: interject with ideas |  |
| ****Segue into conclusion**** | * Student(s) to segue into the conclusion | Group to negotiate. |  |
| Conclusion | * Briefly recap discussion points * End with an ‘offer’ inviting listeners to reflect on their own thoughts rather than telling them what to think * Consider the use of rhetorical questioning and reflective tone | All group members to be involved. |  |

# References

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